THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

NEWS

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Iranian Masters to Perform at the Cleveland Museum of Art on March 18

"Extraordinary masters!" — All Things Considered, NPR

CLEVELAND (Feb. 23, 2005) — Masters of Persian Music, a superstar lineup of Iran's most renowned musicians, return to North America for a 15-city tour that includes the Cleveland Museum of Art's (CMA) **Gartner Auditorium on Friday, March 18, 2005, at 7:30 p.m.** This performance is part of the Museum's acclaimed **VIVA! Festival of Performing Arts** series.

Admission for the performance is $35 and $31; $31 and $28 for CMA members. Tickets are available by calling 216-421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033 or online at www.ClevelandArt.org.

The ensemble includes M.R. Shajarian, the "Pavarotti of Persian classical music" (*Toronto Globe and Mail)*. *Ostad* (Maestro) Shajarian possess one of the most impressive and spiritual voices in the world today and is considered the undisputed master of Persian classical singing. He is revered by millions of Iranians who regard him as a national treasure, attend his concerts and buy his recordings. He is a recipient of the prestigious UNESCO Picasso Award, which recognizes musicians who have contributed to peace, dialogue and international cooperation.

Other ensemble members include Ostad Hossein Alizadeh on *tar* and *setar* (lute), virtuoso *kamancheh* (spike fiddle) player Kayhan Kalhor, along with Homayoun Shajarian, Persian singing's brightest emerging star and son of Ostad Shajarian.

Ostad Alizadeh is known for his groundbreaking musical compositions for Iranian ensembles and western style orchestras. He is master of Iranian *tar* and *setar* and in 2000 his country's Ministry of Culture named him as their most important contemporary artist. He performs across the globe and has conducted and performed as a soloist with the Iranian National Radio and Television Orchestra. He occasionally teaches master classes at universities in Europe and the U.S.

Kayhan Kalhor is renowned for his innovative interpretations of classical Persian repertoire. He is a featured composer and performer for Yo-Yo Ma's "Silk Road Project" and has also composed works for the Kronos Quartet. He founded the Indo-Persian music ensemble Ghazal and is a founding member of the Dastan Ensemble, one of the most important Persian classical music ensembles performing today.

(more)

Homayoun Shajarian has accompanied his father on percussion and vocals at concerts around the world. As a child prodigy, Homayoun began his studies at an early age under the supervision of his father. His vast vocal range and warm singing style possess a striking resemblance to his father and has made him into one of the rising stars of Persian classical singing.

Each of these musicians has been at the forefront of a renaissance that has swept Persian classical music in recent decades. Performing as a quartet since 2001, the ensemble's innovative use of modern Persian poetry has resulted in a fresh look at Persian classical music while simultaneously preserving this century old tradition.

Four years after their historic first tour the super group returns for a tour in support of their latest CD, "Faryad" ("The Cry"). A two-disc collection based in the Rastpanjgah mode of the Persian repertoire, the album takes its inspiration from the work of such Persian poets as Sa'adi, Hafez and Ghorrat ol Ein. In addition, "Faryad" features traditional songs from the Persian classical canon and new compositions by Alizadeh, Kalhor and M.R. Shajarian.

Persian music is an ancient art form and one of the earliest musical traditions known today. Because of the geographic location and sociopolitical role of the ancient Persian Empire, Persian music and culture has contributed enormously to the foundation of many other musical traditions in Central Asia, Asia Minor, China and North India. Since becoming associated with Islamic culture after the Arab invasion (7th century AD), it has traveled throughout the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean. Traces can be seen in North Africa Andalucian music and Spanish Flamenco.

The next performance in the VIVA! Festival of Performing Arts will be **Guinga: Music from Brazil on Friday, April 8, 2005, at 7:30 p.m. in the Museum's Gartner Auditorium**. Recipient of four Premio Sharp awards (Brazil's Grammy) Guinga is a true master of his country's vast and beautiful musical heritage. His songs have been recorded by some of the greatest names in Brazilian music. Ohio debut. Tickets are $28 and $25; $25 and $22 for CMA members and are available by calling 1-888-CMA-0033 or online at www.ClevelandArt.org.

The Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council and the Institute for Museum and Library Services. Promotional support for VIVA! is provided by Northern Ohio Live and WKSU 89.7 FM.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of America's leading comprehensive Museums. Its permanent collection is world renowned for its quality and breadth, spanning 6,000 years. The Museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and art acquisitions. For more information on the Museum, its holdings, programs, services and events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.

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